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ABSTRACT

The increasing health needs of students over the last 20 years have left many school personnel with questions and fears about helping these students. This program outline offers suggestions for school health care plans for students. It is essential that all people involved with the student be invited to be a part of the team. Key team members are: parents, the school nurse, teachers, administrators, support staff, and the student. If the student is receiving Special Education services, the team must also include the special education teacher, and other connected personnel. The goals in devising a health care plan are to assure that all student health needs are met at school; to make sure that all appropriate school personnel are informed of student health needs and what steps they might need to take; to open lines of communication between school, home health care providers, and outside agencies; and to provide school staff with a comfort level regarding student health needs so that workers can appropriately carry out educational programs. Procedures and instructions on how to assemble the team, what to cover in each meeting, and how to reach consensus on a plan are given. (RJM)

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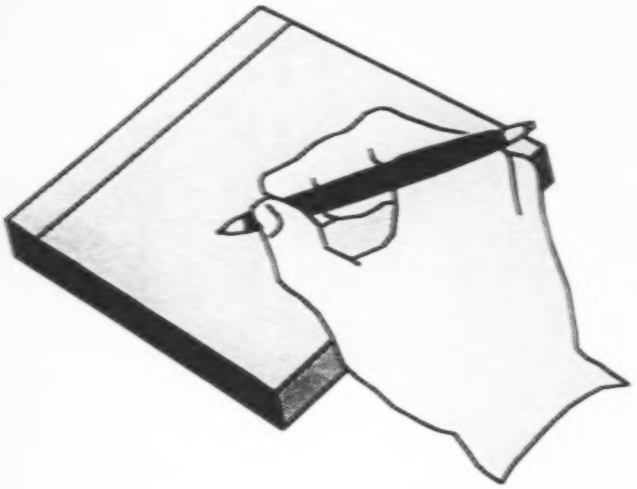
# HEALTH CARE PLANS



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## Health Care Plans:

In the last twenty years, schools across our nation have opened their doors to students with ever increasing health needs. Many staff are uncomfortable working with these students because of unanswered questions and fear that they could harm the student. If you know of teachers or other staff in this situation, this process could assist your school in meeting the needs of staff, students, and parents

## Participants:

It is essential that all people involved with the student are invited to be part of the team. The success of the process hinges on the participation of all stakeholders so that all questions are asked, all input gathered, and all solutions understood. Key members of the team are the parent, school nurse, teachers, administrators, support staff, and the student. If the student is receiving Special Education services, the team must include the special education teacher, the Director of Special Services, and other appropriate staff such as Ed Techs, Speech/Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, etc.. Other possible members include Guidance Counselors, Bus Drivers, Substitute Teachers, Consultants, and caseworkers from outside agencies.

## Goals:

To assure that all student health needs are met at school.

To assure that all appropriate school personnel are

informed of student health needs and what steps they might need to take.

To open lines of communication between school, home health care providers, and outside agencies.

To provide school staff with a comfort level regarding student health needs so that they can appropriately carry out educational programs.

## Procedures and Instructions:

Once you have gathered all the appropriate forms, policies, and resources so that you understand the process, begin forming your team by talking to key stakeholders such as school nurse, administrators, or teachers.

When agreement is reached that this process would be valuable, contact the parent to explain your concern and schedule a team meeting. It is very important that the team meeting be scheduled at a time when all members can attend even if this requires staff coverage or release time.

The first meeting should be a review of the process and a compilation of medical history. All members of the team should have the opportunity to honestly express their concerns and questions. A list of issues to be addressed in the Health Care Plan should be made and assignments given to obtain further information needed.

The next meeting should be scheduled about a month later so that the school nurse has time to draft the initial plan and the team members have adequate time to complete assigned

tasks. At the next meeting the plan is reviewed and new information is incorporated into the plan. There is again an opportunity for questions and concerns to be raised so that all team members feel that they have been listened to and that they understand the plan.

These types of meetings should continue until all parts of the plan are completed and understood by all those involved with the student. Students with multiple health needs may require 3, 4, or more such meetings. If the parent does not attend the meetings for whatever reason, it is essential that he/she be informed of progress and have input throughout the process. This contact could include telephone calls, separate meetings at the school with the school nurse, or home visits.

When the plan is finalized to the team's satisfaction, the entire plan should be mailed or taken to the primary physician of the student for his/her review and approval. Changes may need to be made if the physician has additional input that could be valuable for the school program. The plan also needs to be signed by the school nurse, school administrator, and parent. When everyone is in agreement with the plan, copies need to be provided to each person who works with the child and the original needs to be placed in the child's file.

Lastly, the parent should be asked to report any changes in the student's health condition to the school nurse when it occurs. Changes can be made to the Health Plan if needed. The Health Care Plan should be reviewed in a team format at least annually to be certain that all information is current and

applicable.

## Resources:

This project is a relatively low cost project in terms of dollars but can be a high cost project in terms of staff time and commitment. You may need to spend money to release staff to attend meetings if this cannot be handled internally.

## Summary:

Health Care Plans have been a real positive step here at Southern Aroostook School. By participating in the process, many problems were resolved and staff concerns were addressed. The full support of administration and the school nurse is a key to this project's success. It is also important that each participant is willing to take ownership in the process and to take individual responsibility for assigned tasks. Overall, the project is a plus for all parties.